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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000527

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2016

TAGS: PREL KPAL MU

SUBJECT: HAMAS OFFICIAL VISITS OMAN

REF: MUSCAT 443

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo. Reason: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Palestinian Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal arrived in Muscat April 2 for two days of meetings with Omani government leaders. A former senior USG official happened to witness Meshaal's arrival via a special flight from Qatar, noting that Meshaal was greeted in warm style at the airport by Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi and other MFA top personnel. In an April 2 meeting to receive a copy of the Ambassador's credentials, the FM made no mention of the impending arrival of Meshaal.

¶2. (C) As the Minister indicated to us in a March 22 meeting with DCM (reftel), Meshaal was received by Deputy Prime Minister Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmud al-Said, but very deliberately not by the Sultan. Meshaal held a meeting April 3 with the President of Oman's elected parliamentary body, the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council), and MFA Undersecretary Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi also hosted the delegation to lunch on April 3. The Deputy Director of the Undersecretary's office assured Pol/Econ Chief that Sayyid Badr underscored the same firm message to Meshaal as delivered by the FM the previous evening: namely, that Hamas must commit itself to peaceful dialogue, the roadmap, and existing agreements with Israel. Local media coverage of the visit was brief and perfunctory, though it did receive front-page placement in all dailies, Arabic and English.

GRAPPO